

# Solon

## T I M E S

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## City approves final housing plan for Solon Community Living project

By MICHELE COLLINS

Solon Community Living, (SCL) the nonprofit organization that will build housing for adults with developmental disabilities, received its final building plan approval from the Solon City Council this week.

The approval is the latest hurdle crossed by the organization behind the project and its founders, Ara and Leslie Bagdasarian, who said they have been working on the project for seven long years.

The Bagdasarians, who have two adult children who will live in the new housing unit, received a round of applause after the council voted unanimously to approve the plan.

Prior to coming before the council, Solon voters had to approve a new zoning regulation required to create a pocket community for developmentally disabled adults, which they did with 83 percent of the vote.

From there, nearly 20 variances to city code had to be approved to allow the triplex-designed buildings being built on small inward-facing lots.

In addition, there have been numerous legal questions for the Portz Parkway and Aurora Road area neighborhood that will ultimately include six homes providing housing for 14 adults. The homes will also include second-floor suites to enable six caregivers to live onsite.

Mr. Bagdasarian spoke to the city council and those in attendance – including city employees and SCL supporters – and said he wanted to “thank each and every person in this room because everyone had a stake in making this happen.”

He added that he and the community director are “presently reviewing numerous family applications and look forward to building a community that will serve adult children with developmental disabilities effectively, with love, care, and compassion.”

In a video describing the project shown during the council meeting, Mrs. Bagdasarian said, “We have to get this right because we are living it.”

In a poignant moment, Mr. Bagdasarian asked his daughter, Julie, who was in attendance, where she was going to live someday.

“In Solon Community Living,” she quietly answered.

“We can see now that we are going to be successful. We are getting to the other side of the mountain,” said Mr. Bagdasarian, who added that the community had received applications for six of the suites, and had raised about 70 percent of the funding required for the project.

Solon Law Director Tom Lobe became emotional when giving a comment at the end of the council

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Photo by Anton Albert

The Solon Italian Club and the Solon Senior Center partnered for a Oct. 13 pasta dinner fundraiser benefiting senior center programming. Pictured above in the community center kitchen are, from left, Scott Smiley, member of the senior center council; Mike DiCarro, member of the Solon Italian Club; Ron Lanci, Italian club member; Sally Stanek, senior center activities coordinator; and Jill Frankel, director of senior services for the City of Solon.

## Fundraising feast

Italian Club, Senior Center partner for deli-

By MICHELE COLLINS

Five hundred and fifty meatballs, 40 pounds of pasta, 62 quarts of sauce, and 250 dinner rolls filled the prep table in the Solon Community Center banquet kitchen.

Members of the Solon Italian Club and staff from the Solon Senior Center met early in the afternoon on Oct. 13 to get started creating the first-ever Pasta Dinner fundraiser for the Solon Senior Center.

The dinner, a joint effort between the Italian Club and the senior center, would host more than 200 people that evening in the banquet room of the community center.

Ron Lanci, an Italian Club member

who has a background in catering, started hand-forming the meatballs two weeks prior to the event. He mixed his “sort of secret” spice blend to add to the sauce, which includes his signature parmesan cheese rind that cooks in the sauce for hours. Add to the list the preparation of the salad and desserts, and Mr. Lanci, Mike DiCarro, and other Italian Club “chefs,” literally prepared a meal for hundreds.

Scott Smiley, a member of the senior center senior council, who joked he was Italian for the day, was called on to bring more ingredients. Mr. Smiley, who talks with Mr. DiCarro at the Solon Recreation Center on many mornings, came up with the idea to do a pasta dinner fundraiser, rather than a fundraiser like a 50/50 raffle, to support the

center.

“I thought, how can we do something to raise lots of money, rather than just a little,” said Mr. Smiley. “I remembered the pasta dinners the club used to do and asked Mike (DiCarro) what he thought.”

Would the Italian club members be willing to do all the cooking? Would they be able to cook, serve and clean up?

Mr. DiCarro took the idea to the Italian Club and “they didn’t even hesitate,” said Mr. DiCarro. “They were all in.”

In fact, club members even donated most of the ingredients for the dinner.

With assistance from Jill Frankel, the city’s director of senior services,

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## Solon teen with behavioral disabilities charged after spanking 13-year-old girl

By MICHELE COLLINS

Solon police officers were called to an incident at the Orchard Middle School playground last week after a 17-year-old juvenile male who reportedly suffers from behavioral disabilities, allegedly swatted the buttocks of a 13-year-old Solon girl after school hours.

The Wednesday, Oct. 12 incident follows a similar incident reported by the same girl about the same juvenile

which occurred sometime on Saturday, Sept. 3, according to police officials.

In the original incident, the male juvenile was charged with a misdemeanor count of sexual imposition involving inappropriate touching in Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court.

The second incident, which occurred after school hours at 6:30 p.m., was also referred to the prosecutor’s office at the juvenile court.

In both cases, officials with

the Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities were asked to assist with the case.

Lt. William Vajdich, public information officer for the Solon Police Department, said the situation involved the juvenile suspect “chasing after the girls.” Both the 13-year-old victim and her 12-year-old friend reported both incidents occurred when the girls were riding their bicycles

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